

## City Manager's Budget Chat March 14, 2016

### FY17 Budget Chat with Mary Bunting

(Replay)

6:29



**Brian:** Thank you for joining our live budget chat with City Manager Mary Bunting.

Please feel free to submit your questions early to the queue . . . we will post them and the Manager's answers starting at 7 p.m.



6:58



**Mary Bunting:** Welcome to our on-line town hall budget chat. I am glad to be with you this evening to discuss your thoughts and answer your questions about our city's budget. I am also glad to answer or address other topics if time permits, but budget questions will have priority. If, for any reasons, we cannot get to your comments or questions tonight, please feel free to email me any time at [mbunting@hampton.gov](mailto:mbunting@hampton.gov).

7:00



**Mary Bunting:** We are in the midst of preparing our fiscal year 2017 budget - for the year that runs from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Hampton is one of only a handful of cities to offer citizens a chance to comment about the budget BEFORE the manager makes a recommendation. We offer this in hopes that my recommended budget can reflect the community's priorities as much as fiscal resources and legal constraints permit.

7:01

#### **Comment From Leo**

I am new to this so I will withhold my question for now

7:03



**Mary Bunting:** Welcome Leo - thanks for joining us. This is how the on-line chat works: all you need to do is type a question or comment and hit send. That puts your submission into the queue and the moderator will post it in the order received, with budget questions having the priority. Feel free to just watch also if you prefer.

7:03

**Comment From Dave**

Will money be available to repaint and repair school crosswalks- many are faded and cannot be clearly seen by motorists

7:05



**Mary Bunting:** Dave: Thank you for your question. The City provides approximately \$5.3 million each year for the school system to maintain or fix school facilities. The School Board prioritizes the use of funds. However, I will certainly have our Public Works Department confer with the School System on cross-walks to see if we can get them addressed.

7:06

**Comment From Leo**

Why is the City wasting money for security to a piece of property that has already been vandalized?



7:08



**Mary Bunting:** Leo: I am not sure which property you are discussing, but I suspect you may be referring to the Virginia School for Deaf and Blind. If I am right, the reason is that we do not want vandals or the surrounding community to be exposed to the materials in the older buildings. The good news is we just received bids to demolish the old buildings and once that is complete we will not longer need to provide the security.

7:08

**Comment From Angela**

Any comments on the MLK bridge? How city funds are involved?

7:09



**Mary Bunting:** Angela: The only use of city funds for the naming of the bridge would be minimal - just erecting new signage. We have an in-house capability of producing street and bridge signs.



7:10

### **Comment From Samantha**

What is the best place to submit a proposal that would require numerous partnerships with city departments and agencies in Hampton and Newport News, HRT, NASA and many others, and a coordinated effort applying for federal, foundation and corporate grants? The project may have overlaps with current efforts - review of individual departments' FY2017 budget and CIP may be desired to determine availability of matching funds for many upcoming grant opportunities. The scope of the project is 200 to 250 million with a return of 100 million every ten years at a minimum and involves affordable housing construction, transportation and attraction, recreation and business connectivity, increased national and international tourism, economic development, climate adaptation and safe guarding natural resources, water and water reuse is a central feature in this project. The initial focus is the Peninsula, although the immediate surrounding localities would most likely also benefit. This project would result in differentiation from competition in nearby coastal areas, and possibly the rest of the world. It would also require input from the public and stakeholders in the community. Thank you.



7:13



**Mary Bunting:** Samantha - the City has an unsolicited proposal process that is run through our Economic Development Department. Once the proposal is submitted, our internal departments review the submission for completeness and evaluate it. Once that is complete, the proposal is shared with City Council. To make sure your submission is complete, please contact the Economic Development Department at 757-727-6237.

7:13

**Comment From Dave**

Thank you- for your efforts

7:14

**Comment From Alan**

Are you including in the FY17 budget funding for aerial mosquito spraying? With this new virus out mosquito control is at the top of my mind.

7:16



**Mary Bunting:** Alan: we include funds for mosquito control in every budget. How we respond each year depends on the type and quantity of mosquitoes. Sometimes direct application is preferred over aerial treatment. When we treat aerially, we do so in concert with Langley Air Force Base. Our mosquito control team is already working on the Zika virus potential.

7:16

**Comment From Angela**

Thank you.

7:16

**Comment From Anvil**

With the salary compensation survey such an utter failure for everyone except the streets department will salaries be a major consideration? Most people got roughly 300 dollars more over a year. It seemed like a gigantic waste of time and funds.



7:19



**Mary Bunting:** Anvil - I am sorry you feel the compensation study was a failure. The study's purpose was not to raise everyone's salary, but rather to see if our compensation was appropriate in terms of the external market. About 20% of the workforce got pay increases as a result of the first phase of study implementation which focused on new pay scales. The next phase will look at internal compression. I think the study was worth the funds and time spent so we can be assured that we are paying our employees in accordance with the market.



7:21



**Mary Bunting:** Annual salary increases are what we strive to provide all employees when the economy permits. This past year we gave all employees a 3% raise on July 1st and we covered 100% of the health insurance increase.

7:21

**Comment From Alan**  
OK thank you

7:21

**Comment From Michael**  
Is the City still behind in payment to VRS? What is the current percentage?

7:22



**Mary Bunting:** Michael - The City is not, and has not been, behind in VRS payments. We have always fully funded what the actuarial study required.



7:22

**Comment From Michael**

Mrs. Bunting, Over in Wythe we've had quite a few guns fired in the evening, plus fireworks, and several serious assaults and now another homicide. The Chief mentions a shortage of officers, and that there is a plan or plans to overcome the shortages until new employees are hired, trained and on the job. What re those plans and are they funded from the allotted vacancies?

7:26



**Mary Bunting:** Michael - Public Safety is a major priority for us. I have told the Chief and the Council that I would fund additional officers if the Chief can fill them. However, due to retirements and training academy schedules (there are currently only two per year and each has a maximum capacity), he has not been able to get all of the jobs he already has filled. We are looking to bring back retired police officers part-time to help fill the gap and exploring ways to add more frequent training academies. In the meantime, I have authorized the Chief to use salary savings for overtime.

7:27



**Mary Bunting:** These efforts will continue into next year's budget. I also plan to fund body cameras for all police officers as well as provide other technological enhancements that will help our policy officers in their jobs.

7:27

**Comment From Leo**

To comment on a subject of pay and the budget why a study then a pay raise of 3% followed by a bonus across the board?



7:30



**Mary Bunting:** Leo - Our employees had not had raises for several years due to the economy. Thus, the study was initiated to see how far out of market we got. In the meantime, it was important that we give all employees a salary increase. The order of implementation was thus:

July 1, 2015 - 3% general wage increase

January, 2016, original target date, actually March, 2016 - new pay scales

July 1, 2016 - another general wage increase plus compression adjustments

The bonus was given out of end of the year departmental savings that employees helped to create. We thought it only fitting and proper to share those savings with them for their hard work and in recognition that they did not have raises for several years.



7:31

**Comment From Leo**

What are the future plans for VSDB and how will the budget be affected by the plans?

7:32



**Mary Bunting:** Leo - the money for the demolition was already set aside in prior years - it just took a long time to do all of the environmental permitting that needed to be done to get to the place where we could bid the work. Once it is demolished, we plan to put the property out for redevelopment.

7:32

**Comment From cdc**

I would like to know what is going on with the Atlantic Rd area projected redevelopment project, specifically how many houses is the city buying and razing and what is the projected date of completion? I have heard they are going to make the road wider and it is to become another entrance to Ft. Monroe, is this true. And how long after you board up the houses do you plan to raze them? Leaving them boarded up leads to problems with break ins and possible drug transactions. Thank you for any info or direction where I can obtain this information!

7:35



**Mary Bunting:** This is not a budget question but cdc has been waiting for a long time. I do not have an exact number in from of me (I am actually doing this chat from home as I was sick today). Most of the property is being purchased by HRHA for redevelopment (not subsidized housing). I can get that information when I return if you email me. Our plan is to demolish the houses quickly.

7:36



**Mary Bunting:** The road between Buckroe and Fort Monroe is and has been a priority for the City. I will say it would not be a regular road due to environmental and preservation concerns, but we would like the ability to get walkers, bikers, etc. as well as emergency vehicles between the two areas. We do have to work through this with the National Park Service and Commonwealth.



7:37

**Comment From Arielle**

I see there are a number of streets being repaved around the city. What's determining what streets are being paved and when? And when will Kecoughtan Rd north (I think) of LaSalle Ave toward Downtown be repaved?

7:38



**Robin McCormick:** I'll answer this, since we have so many

questions in the queue. That stretch of Kecoughtan is not currently in the plan for the fiscal year that ends June 30. (You can see it online at <http://hampton.gov/index.as...>).

Public Works looks at the streets' condition over a period of time using sophisticated measuring equipment and in-person visits to determine which streets need to be repaved first. Next fiscal year's list should be ready this summer, and we'll pass along your concern to the department.

7:39

**Comment From D3n0**

I am a resident and was an employee of the city. I was reviewing the public safety budget and don't understand how if public safety is a priority, the police budget is losing almost a quarter of a million. You talk about making hampton desirable to business and to attract higher property values for real estate, but do you really think that is going to happen with the up-tick in violent crime?

7:42



**Mary Bunting:** D3n0 - You are correct that the budget for the police department BEFORE salary increases went down by about \$250K. If you look at the budget notes, you will see that this was due to filling positions vacated by more senior retirees at lower rates and because of fuel savings. I do not consider this a devaluing of public safety - rather good management practices. All salary and benefit increases are budgeted in the Retirement & Employee Benefits Budget so if you added the cost of the 3% raise to the police budget, the total budget would actually go up.

7:42

**Comment From Charles**

Acknowledging that the police are not the cure all to crime in our communities, will there be additional funding and support toward neighborhood and community development activities to enhance community ownership and relationship building. Also, increased funding to enhance recreational opportunities for youth and families.

7:44



**Mary Bunting:** Charles - Yes, you are absolutely correct, and I thank you for making that point. We have made major investments in youth and families including but not limited to our Healthy Start program, parenting classes to help all parents in the city free of charge, youth athletics, community centers, summer youth employment, neighborhood development, grassroots grants to help non-profits expand their reach to helping those in need, etc. Look for the budget to have funds specifically devoted to youth violence prevention.



7:45

**Comment From Concerned HS parent**

Dave brought up the school crosswalks. The student parking lot needs to be repainted at Bethel High School. The lines are barely visible and cannot be seen by motorists as well as the inexperienced students. This is a safety concern as there is no true, safe traffic flow and lack of school personnel on the student parking side for dismissal either.

7:46



**Mary Bunting:** Concerned HS parent: Student parking lots are the School System responsibility, but we might be able to offer the assistance of our Traffic Engineering equipment to repaint the stripes. Dr. Smith and I were recently talking about such partnership opportunities.

7:46

**Comment From chriis**

Mrs.B. how do we help property owners who shoulder the expenses of the school budget? We're building a lot of apartments where children reside. Do you take a percentage of the property tax assessments and funnel it into the school budget? 55% is quite high!

7:49



**Mary Bunting:** Chriis - Many people think that renters do not pay property taxes like the rest of us. While they do not directly pay, the owners of apartment complexes do and pass the taxes onto renters through their rent. In fact, this year, apartment assessments went up while overall homes in the City were flat (some were up and some down, but they averaged out to be flat).

We have a funding formula that shares about 62% of all the residential real estate, personal property and utility tax revenues with the schools. Schools must be a top priority even for folks without kids in the schools, because schools impact so many things such as housing values, economic development, the image of our city, etc.

7:50

**Comment From Terry**

Does HRHA have a specific number of people they are required to assist, and would you have that number?

7:50



**Mary Bunting:** Terry - I do not have that number with me, but if you email me I will get that information to you.

7:50

**Comment From Concerned HS parent**

Being sensitive to the safety and needs of our students should prove as an advantageous effort with the school system. Considering trying to draw, keep, and encourage families to come, stay, and/or return making steps forward with a partnership with Hampton City Schools should be moved up on the priority list. If the City wants to gain more approval and buy-in from parents, these opportunities could definitely be mutually beneficial



7:50

**Comment From cdc**

Thank you Mary

7:51

**Comment From Dave**

Would it be possible for a major effort to crack down on speeding and dangerous driving in school zones?

7:53



**Mary Bunting:** Dave - We do these types of patrols in response to concerns that surface from schools as resources allow.

7:53

**Comment From chris**

Thank you. We totally support the school system but when our property taxes start exceeding our mortgages there should be some innovative steps that could be examined. Appreciate you taking the time to host this forum.

7:55



**Mary Bunting:** chriis - Thanks for your kind words. I am glad to do this. Council and staff understand that there is a limit to how much we can expect residents to pay. That is why you see an aggressive economic development agenda to increase jobs, tourism, retail and higher value housing in our community. Maybe we can host another forum when we can talk more about these strategies.

7:55

**Comment From Arielle**

Thank you for your response.

7:55

**Comment From Dave**

Thanks-



7:55

**Comment From Concerned HS parent**

We certainly would appreciate the help of the City of Hampton and the Traffic Engineering department/equipment to improve the safety for our students.

7:55

**Comment From Concerned HS parent**

Can the city help in the area of safety for our young drivers and students?



7:56



**Mary Bunting:** Concerned HS parent - I am not really sure what you are asking. Can you please elaborate? I know the school system offers drivers education to all 10th grade students.

7:56

**Leo**  
**Comment From Leo**



Vandals and the community are at risk and the city has failed the citizens with the lack of care and concern for history and humanity and are missing a opportunity to further put Hampton on the map instead of money thru taxes into the budget to do studies, ask the Governor about \$66 million dollars available that the city lets lay to rest.

7:58



**Mary Bunting:** Leo - we do aggressively pursue state economic development dollars. The Governor has funded many economic development expansions here in Hampton. However, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss your thoughts and concerns more if you would give me a call or email.

7:58

**Comment From Arielle**

What are the plans for the current court house when th new one across the street is opened? And is their citizen input for use of the building?

7:59



**Robin McCormick:** I'll help the manager clear the queue: There have been two in-person meetings to get public input on the old courthouse, and an online forum. At the moment, the City is further investing a multi-faceted arts proposal that includes both non-profit and for-profit ventures with art courses, artists in residence, studio space for rent, a café, a screening theatre, and a business incubator, among other uses. You can see updates and the presentation at [www.hampton.gov/courthouse](http://www.hampton.gov/courthouse).

8:00

**Comment From Leo**

I understand the time frame and the value set aside ,over the years I have not seen a increase to reflect interest growth on that set aside money to correlate to inflation,please explain as the city is going to fund a conceptual design from company out in Roanoke

8:01



**Mary Bunting:** Leo: If you are talking about the cost of demolition, the bids are back and the amount of the money we set aside is sufficient to cover the received bids. The HRHA used a company to help envision what the property might allow in terms of a mixed income community when they were looking at possibility using the site. I believe they have since decided to do a mixed income development on the former Lincoln Park and Tower site. Again, if you would like to further discuss any issues or concerns please feel free to contact me.

8:02

**Comment From Concerned HS parent**

Thank you for listening to our concerns and helping in every way possible.

8:02

**Comment From Arielle**

Thank you

8:02

**Comment From Curious**

About what percentage of the budget funds environmental quality in the city?

8:02



**Mary Bunting:** Curious - I do not have that figure in front of me. Please feel free to contact me off-line.